Robert J. Durant
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12 May 1992

Marcello Truzzi, Ph.D.
5010 Willis Road
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Dear Dr. Truzzi:

I want to apologize for this very late reply to your kind letter of March 10th.

You wondered about the reaction to the Scott Jones paper. A few people thought it was a major addition to the ufological literature, but they were in the very distinct minority. Those whom I thought would consider it a significant document, such as our mutual friend Jerry Clark, and nearly every other "name" in ufology, greeted the paper with what I can best describe as a chilly formality. No insults, no complaints, just one of those deadening silences between the lines of short and diplomatic "thank you for sharing..." notes.

Westrum did complain, and I thank him at least for a thoughtful response. His bitch being my inclusion of Liechtenstein in the paper, and of course Westrum and others are much in the debt of the Prince, who really does not seem to be part of the "club" I was fixing in my crosshairs.

The only really negative reaction came from that truly singular man, Bill Moore. He called me and fulminated for about 30 minutes. Jones has not been heard from. MUFON asked him to respond, and he declined. A few people, obviously Jones's surrogates, have taken me aside and insisted that although all the facts in the paper are correct, the reasoning is all askew. Specifically, I mean John Alexander and Albert Stubblebine, though I got the distinct impression that Moore was representing the interests of Jones while he beat up on me on the telephone.

However...my paper has recently gotten something of a boost from two sources. First, McConnel's broadside contra Jones and the affairs at ASPR has bolstered my position. And vice-versa, it seems, as McConnel has paid for a large stack of the Durant/Jones papers, which he is raining upon the parapsychologists.

Second, Stubblebine, Alexander and Dames, all mentioned in the paper and singled out in the cover letter, have stepped forward as I predicted. The news about this has not yet hit the hustings, but will soon, and I believe it should make my paper much more credible in the eyes of many. I refer to the presentation at Rima Laibow's TREAT IV of the whole nine yards of Psi Tech's remote viewing data on UFOs. Dames fascinated the audience. I have little doubt that what he had to say will be the major topic in ufology for years to come.

The Jones paper dwells on the ubiquity of federal interest in UFOs, and the unfortunate fact that much of this interest has been bent in the direction of disinforming researchers and wrecking their organizations. My fear, and unstated though inferred conclusion, is that Jones and the rest are simply the latest wave of miscreants. Stubblebine, Alexander and Dames know that is my bias, and politely but firmly told me that I am simply wrong.

Unfortunately, what Dames had to say fits hand in glove with my hypothesis. For example, he joins the rest in insisting that there is no formal federal interest in UFOs. Moreover, he says Roswell never happened, and that abductions are entirely mental affairs: no exams by grays, and all the rest that comprises Jacobs' book, cover to cover. Strange, but the specific items in ufology that Dames singles out for extreme revision are precisely those two that are on the verge of being communicated to the public, and for which there is such a wealth of evidence accumulated over a long period of time by researchers of good character and keen intelligence.

On the other hand, as the man says. It may be that Dames is telling us the truth, not just as he sees it, but the real "event reality" truth. If so, I will freely admit that the goings on with Jones & Co. still make sense, though now it is equally dramatic, but with a benign caste. Just what the guys have been trying to tell me. This is one time that I would genuinly be happy to admit having been wrong, dead wrong.

My current project is to insure that I have exactly what Dames said at TREAT on paper. I gather that he wants the same thing. Then we can start analyzing. The worst thing would be to have his story dribble out in little pieces (drops ?), grist (fluid?) for the rumor mill.

Have you got any ideas for testing the data emanating from Psi Tech?

Sincerely,

Marcello Truzzi, Ph.D.
Consulting Anomalist

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May 21, 1992

Robert J. Durant
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CONFIDENTIAL, PLEASE.

Dear Bob,

Delighted to hear from you and thanks for sharing your thoughts and observations about the ongoing saga.

I am still inclined to think that Jones, et al., represent foolishness rather than insidious disinformation. The fundamental problem with all this scenario construction is that it is mostly unfalisifiable. For example, even if I am right that we are dealing here with misguided rather than misguiding folks, that view is largely because if their stuff was intentional disinformation, it is extremely badly presented disinformation. That is, I think serious disinformation would be better done. If you are going to lie, you would try to make your story as credible as possible. Thus, when Scott Jones read a paper at the Society for Scientific Exploration (as he did), you might expect a good paper. Instead, he presented a paper about his dolphin research that made it apparent he simply did not understand much about scientific research at all. (I think if he were not then Senator Pell's aide, he would have been reacted to with rather strong condemnation for such a poor paper.) To me, this demonstrated Scott's gullibility and lack of critical thinking. On the other hand, I know from my reading of the espionage literature that there is much stupidity in those ranks. So, I guess I must consider that this could be simply a terribly done disinformation effort by not very competent intelligence people. So, one can not rationally make a determination about these scenarios given the data. Because of this, I would rely on parsimony. The simpler explanation is that we are dealing with foolish people. Lots of evidence suggests that.

For example, Ray Hyman told me about how gullible and uncritical General Stubblebine was when his National Research Council committee interviewed him about military use of parapsychology. Stubblebine told stories of being able to astrally travel, bend spoons, etc. Now since this was a serious military assessment which would determine the future of army funding for psychical research, you would expect Stubblebine to be serious and argue for his past use of psychics, etc. Instead, he was viewed as a real flake by Hyman and the others. So, I think he is over the edge. Similarly, my conversations with Dames (who seems a nice fellow) also strike me as coming from over the edge. Everything I here about Laibow strikes me as over the edge. Nothing suggests to me that these folks are anything less than sincere but terribly wrong. I guess there is the possibility that they are all "useful idiots" being unleashed by some intelligence source to mess things up, but that seems to require another level for explanation that simply is unnecessary in terms of parsimony. Foolishness alone would seem to account for it all.

By the way, in your paper you refer to Scott Jones' great memory. I have not found it so good over the years I have dealt with him. He has often not remembered past conversational matters between us. I personally like Scott, but I have never thought him a particularly sharp person.

In short, then, I think you may underestimate the amount of supidity among this group of people (who may be quite smart in some other areas of their lives).

Perhaps I should also mention that a friend who was high in Naval Intelligence ranks once told me that the flakiest people in intelligence were to be found in that branch (due to the way the promotional system in the navy operates). He told me that this was the branch that contained the most paranoia and off-the-wall thinkers and that it had a reputation for that within the general intelligence community. From what I can see, I think he is right. In fact, lots of people have observed that military intelligence may be an oxymoron.

All of this compounded by the fact that all sorts of folks (both among the advocates and the critics) in parapsychology have intelligence backgrounds. Even the ex-head of The National Enquirer was previously a top intelligence officer. So, it is easy to start seeing complex disinformation campaigns everywhere in this area. I just think simple stupidity remains the better theory. (I could of course be wrong.)

From what I can gather from talking to Dames, nothing he says seems really verifiable. And when pressed about some of his statements, he can always hide behind nondisclosure re information his clients would have to allow. So when he talks about working for Fortune 500 companies, we don't know which ones those are, etc.

Disinformation or not, the result of all this recent stuff is to set back ufology about 30 years. In all the paranormal areas, the bad seems to be driving out the good. While New Age bunkum soars, serious psi research is losing its funding. The same may happen in ufology, but I think CUFOS will stand solid against such stuff (thank heavens for people like Swords, etc.).

I think the central problem is that most ufologists are searching for sort of intelligent meaning behind it all, and disinformation at least suggests something intelligent (even if malevolent) is going on. At least paranoic (as opposed to paranoid) speculations make a kind of sense of it all. But I am afraid that at bottom, it remains mostly nonsense. What we are dealing with here is more likely loose cannons than clever scoundrels.

So, at present I can not think of any good ways to "test" your hypothesis. I think you will continue to find reinforcing information, but I don't see what it would take to falsify your conjectures, and that is the key to scientific consideration of such things. For me, the fact that these alleged disinformation agents keep doing such manifestly unreasonable and stupid sounding things argues against their being disinformers (who I think could do it more cleverly quite easily).

The central problem, for me, is that suddenly people with external authority (high rank in the military, credentials as a psychiatrist, being a top aid to a senator, etc.) are being elevated to authority within ufology ranks eventhough they have no credentials as ufology researchers. If others said what they have been saying, they would be far more critically greeted.

Good luck, and do keep in touch.

Cordially,

Marcello

Marcello Truzzi

CSAR Center for Scientific Anomalies Research

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March 10, 1992

Robert J. Durant
106 Hessian Hill Drive
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Dear Mr. Durant:

I was just shown a copy of your most interesting "Will the Real Scott Jones Please Stand Up?" paper which I found very interesting (and useful).

I wonder what sort of reactions you have had to the paper. Has Jones seen it?

I think you pose some very important questions although I am disinclined to share your conclusions from what I know of Jones. (Mainly because I think you give more intellectual credit to him than I would.) Still, you may turn out to be right. If you are right, however, the whole thing may be more complicated than you surmise because of the roles of others in this game.

Anyway, I hope you will share with me your future writings related to all this. And I just thought we probably should be in touch. I am sure we have friends in common (Jerry Clark showed me your paper, for example).

I hope to hear further from you.

Sincerely,

Marcello Truzzi

Publications:
CSAR Bulletin
Zetetic Scholar

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MARCELLO TRUZZI →

I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT ENJOY THIS EXCHANGE BETWEEN MY FRIEND THE CRYPTOZOOLOGIST (NESSIE) RICHARD SMITH AND CARTOONIST SCOTT ADAMS

— BOB DURANT

EWR--BOS
EWR--SAN

Subject: **Re: Dogbert vs. CSICOP?**
Date: Wed, 21 Jan 1998 00:59:16 EST
From: ScottAdams <ScottAdams@aol.com>
Organization: AOL (http://www.aol.com)
To: rdsmith@blast.net

>If so, your point is right on target -- It's not that these people are
>skeptical, it's that they ultimately aren't logical or scientifically
>rigorous _enough_ in their skepticism.

Exactly. They pile good thinking on bad assumptions and get pretty smug about it.

Scott

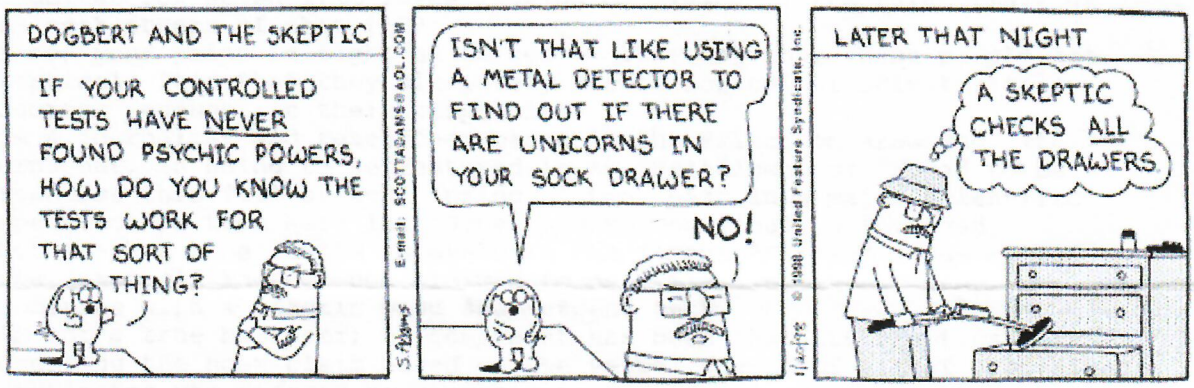
Bob -

I got this response from "Dilbert" cartoonist Adams -

1

The New York Times
Cartoons

DILBERT™ *By Scott Adams*


DOGBERT AND THE SKEPTIC
IF YOUR CONTROLLED TESTS HAVE NEVER FOUND PSYCHIC POWERS, HOW DO YOU KNOW THE TESTS WORK FOR THAT SORT OF THING?
ISN'T THAT LIKE USING A METAL DETECTOR TO FIND OUT IF THERE ARE UNICORNS IN YOUR SOCK DRAWER?
NO!
LATER THAT NIGHT
A SKEPTIC CHECKS ALL THE DRAWERS

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Perfect!

-S.

See my e-mail to Adams, attached

Subject: Dogbert vs. CSICOP?
Date: Tue, 20 Jan 1998 08:38:12 -0500
From: "Richard D. Smith" <rdsmith@blast.net>
To: scottadams@aol.com

Dear Mr. Adams;
While making my morning check of The New York Times On-Line today, I saw your marvelous Dilbert strip of "Dogbert and the Skeptic."
Am I correct in thinking that you're skewering members of CSICOP (Commitee for Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal) or at least others of that ilk?
If so, your point is right on target -- It's not that these people are skeptical, it's that they ultimately aren't logical or scientifically rigorous _enough_ in their skepticism.
I'm a journalist and researcher based in the Princeton area who, it turns out, is going to be featured in an installment of "Nova" to be broadcast this fall or next spring. I took part in a major scientific expedition to Loch Ness last June, and my contribution involved photographic experiments to evaluate the famous "Nessie" image called "the Surgeon's Photo," now claimed to be a hoax involving a toy submarine with a plastic wood sea serpent neck.
I'm not a true believer; my complaint has been that the skeptics were accepting the hoax claim based on the verbal say-so of a self proclaimed conspirator who offered no corraborating evidence and whose story has fatal internal contradictions. Obviously they would never accept this level of shaky evidence as "proof" that such animals _do_ exist in large freshwater lakes. But since it was a debunking, the skeptics have cheerfully abandoned the rules of rigorous scientific investigation and embraced the story.
When I called for a strict scientific evaluation of the hoax story, I was of course castigated by CSICOP (see "Nessie Hoax Redux" by Joe Nickell in the March 1996 issue of Skeptical Briefs and my response with Nickell's comments in "Nessie Hoax Redux -- II" in the September 1996 issue).
Maybe there aren't large, unknown animals in Loch Ness or similar lakes, just as there may not be psychic powers. But it seems to me the skeptics indeed dismiss unicorns merely because their metal detectors don't find them in sock drawers -- or because anyone who claims to have faked unicorns has instant credibility.
Best regards,
Richard D. Smith
rdsmith@blast.net